

Hood River City Council and
Hood River County Commission Joint Work Session
Public Meeting
Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Conducted via Zoom
Videoconference
4:45-6:00 pm

MINUTES

Meeting went live on Zoom at 4:45 pm

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Mike Oates (Board Chair) called the Hood River County joint meeting to order at 4:45 pm.

Mayor Kate McBride called the City of Hood River joint meeting to order at 4:45 pm.

PRESENT: City Councilors: Mayor Kate McBride, Mark Zanmiller (President), Tim Counihan, Erick Haynie, Jessica Metta, Gladys Rivers, Megan Saunders

PRESENT: County Commissioners: Mike Oates (Board Chair), Bob Benton, Karen Joplin, Rich McBride, Les Perkins

Presenters: Alexia Kelly (Hood River Energy Council) Marla Harvey (MCEDD/Hood River Energy Council Coordinator), Jeni Hall (Energy Trust of Oregon), Kari Greer (PacifiCorp Community Relations), Barb Ayers (County Emergency Management).

II. Open Work Session

A. Introductions: Mayor McBride and Commissioner Les Perkins gave an overview of the mission of the Hood River Energy Council (HRCEC), established in 2019 upon adoption of the Hood River County Energy Plan in 2018.

Commissioner Perkins summarized work by the HRCEC as planning for resiliency, from a social and economic perspective, in order to prepare for events such as wildfires, earthquakes, ice storms, and Covid-19. Projects related to preparedness also function to make the community stronger outside of natural events. The planning work of the Hood River County Energy Council places the county ahead of most of the state, and much of the country in taking advantage of funding opportunities, which are increasing all the time. For example, HRCEC has already obtained funding for the HRCEC coordinator's position, and for Energy Trust of Oregon feasibility studies and projects on the ground. The County's project proposals are presently ranked in top 1 and 2 among projects considered for inclusion as part of the State Hazard Mitigation Office's anticipated FEMA/BRIC grant application. The BRIC is a new program aimed at pre-disaster planning, a change from FEMA's normal focus on fixing things after disasters.

B. Climate Change Action and Resilience, Technology, and Policy: Alexia Kelly introduced herself with a short background: 15 years working on climate and clean energy issues with the State Department in the UN, and in other countries providing long-term strategic planning in building resilient and just communities. During her presentation, Alexia shared that recent climate change history shows an increased average temperature of 1.5° F in the Pacific NW, which is worse than models had predicted. This impacts infrastructure and livelihoods, necessitating new perspectives and strategies. For example, in the event of a power shut-off that may last up to several days, how does our community respond and continue to operate?

She discussed two of county's major electric energy suppliers in the County, their mix of renewable vs. non-renewable power and prices, sharing that Pacific Power is still largely fossil fuel while Hood River Electric Co-op is primarily large hydro. As technology improves, we are experiencing a sea-change in relative values of various renewables such as wind and solar in terms of cost, risk, and in energy production and distribution. Large energy production hubs and transmission lines will be replaced by numerous smaller hubs of renewable production and consumption feeding into local grids in a bidirectional flow. There will be many opportunities and challenges in developing a community-wide clean, integrated approach to energy.

C. Energy Plan and Energy Council Progress Review: Marla Harvey outlined her position with the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) with her main role as support for the HRCEC. She gave an overview of the Hood River County Energy Plan, its programs and goals. She discussed how the HRCEC members and staff put the Energy Plan into action by providing coordination, expertise, and consultation in addressing the Plan's goals. Marla provided highlights of HRCEC work from the past two years and provided one or more examples of its work in each of the following areas:

- Supporting public fleets and buildings: Collaborating with the City, County and Port of Hood River to plan or conduct a variety of detailed assessments of public buildings and vehicles.
- Preparing Critical Facilities: Preparing critical facilities within the county to be energy resilient through microgrid analysis.
- Increasing community access: In coordination with the Energy Council MCEDD received a \$120,000 grant to build out strategies to increase access to beneficial energy projects, with emphasis on strategies for low-income and Latinx communities.
- Mapping Energy Resilience and Industry: Among other things, MCEDD will be interviewing representatives of key local industries to begin understanding the cost of power outages in order to identify the value of energy resilient strategies.

D. Building Energy Resilience: Jeni Hall, the program manager and technical lead for the solar program of Energy Trust of Oregon (ETO) defined a microgrid as a group of interconnected loads and distributed energy resources. Installation of a solar system with battery storage thus makes a home or business a microgrid. Jeni highlighted Governor Brown has told communities that they will need to be prepared for a two-week power outage in the event of a Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. The Energy Trust of Oregon is primarily funding and serving as project manager for microgrid feasibility studies at nine critical facilities in Hood River County to design solar and storage systems that could make those sites energy independent in the event of a two-week power outage. Solar + storage also provides flexibility and equity outside of emergencies. Depending on where the facility is located, it can serve as the power supply for a trailer park, food bank, hospital, etc., saving money on monthly energy bills.

Highlights of HRCEC/ETO work include:

- Community energy resilience planning
- Resilience and disaster vulnerability mapping to indicate locations best suited for solar plus battery storage
- Microgrid feasibility study sites at 9 critical facilities
- Support for grant applications

E. Pacific Power Updates on PSPS: Kari Greer updated the Council and Commission on Pacific Power's Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) planning and implementation. Kari highlighted that she had met with the City, County, as well as the Fire Chief, Emergency Manager, and the Sheriff to inform them of Pacific

Power's approach to PSPS. The utility hosted one tabletop exercise last year, and plans to do another. The Hood River waterfront, downtown, and the Heights have been "hardened" and would not be included in a PSPS. Construction is ongoing, with a plan to harden the entire service area by 2021 and remove any Hood River or Wasco PSPS zones by December 2021, leaving potentially one more possible PSPS season of Summer 2021. In a shutoff event, 72 hours' notice would be given to the Emergency Manager, Sheriff, and Fire Chief. Subsequently, 48-, 24-, 2-, and 1-hour notices would be given to customers, and they would also be alerted when power is restored.

F. Emergency Preparedness and Community Resilience: Barb Ayers shared that the Emergency Management Office has many partners in the local governing bodies and nonprofit community. The County's top hazards include wildfires and winter storms with PSPS events and COVID-19 added onto the list of concerns in the last year or so.

Recent accomplishments and ongoing concerns include:

- Development of a public outreach program: getreadygorge.com outlining steps for 2-week preparedness.
- Listing of services critical for continuity of operation from day 1, week 1, etc., post-event.
- Beginning an emergency shelter framework that will be community-based (not Red Cross)
- Identifying essential needs for public safety. For example, there is a profound lack of backup power in buildings that will be used in emergencies.
- Identifying vulnerable populations in planning for events such as PSPS or COVID-19.
- Securing grant funding for backup generators for the cities of Mosier and Hood River.
- Investigation of other funding sources such as: seismic retrofitting grants, FEMA, and Homeland Security grants.

G. Connecting the Dots and Charting a Path Forward: Alexia Kelly summarized the interconnectedness of renewable, locally-generated energy and emergency preparedness. The Community Scale subcommittee is advancing the county's FEMA/BRIC application, due in November.

H. Discussion:

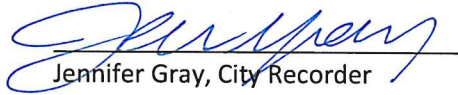
- Council members asked for details on the FEMA/BRIC opportunity. It was reviewed that the Energy Council helped submit two letters of intent one for solar + storage infrastructure at critical facilities (up to \$9 million) and another for drought/flood mitigation through proactive management (up to \$26 million). The scale and value of this opportunity was discussed. Challenges of taking on FEMA funding was also expressed.
- Alexia Kelly stated there is a need for fiscal planning: to prepare financial channels to receive funds, manage public/private partnerships, and deploy resources. Mayor McBride added that in strategic planning, the governing bodies need to allocate staff time to help put grant funding to use.
- Commissioner Perkins encouraged the governing bodies to use HRCEC as a resource on planning projects.
- Councilor Zanmiller expressed appreciation for much of the work of the Energy Council and that, in the future, he would like to see greater coordination and communication with City Council.
- A discussion regarding FEMA/BRIC application requirements and current status of County proposed projects was cut short when the meeting ended.

Adjournment:

Mayor McBride adjourned the meeting at 6 pm.



Kate McBride, Mayor



Jennifer Gray, City Recorder

Approved by City Council on 11/23/2020